

## Exploring Online Safety Knowledge and Evaluating CEOP's Think U Know Education Programme

### Aims

This project aimed to (i) explore young people's understanding and awareness of Internet safety and online behaviour, and (ii) determine the effectiveness of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre's *Think U Know* (TUK) Internet safety programme.

### Key Findings

- One in five young people have had a 'threatening' experience online, described as being made to feel uncomfortable. Boys are twice as likely as girls to do nothing in reaction to such experiences.
- Most young people report that the most common source of online safety advice is parents/relatives and schools, and they are generally aware of what they should do in response to a threatening online situation.
- Young people who have had some safety advice in the past two years are slightly less likely to share personal details with strangers. For example, 34% of young people who had *not* received any internet safety advice had shared details of where they go to school with a stranger, compared with 23 % of children who had received internet safety advice.
- A substantial proportion of children reported having engaged in risk taking behaviour online (defined by the degree to which they share information with strangers):
  - 37% had provided an email address
  - 34% had provided information about the school attended
  - 26% had shared personal photograph
  - 36% said Internet safety training would make them more careful online
- The survey and focus groups found that those young people who have had (TUK) training were more likely to say they would report abuse online via CEOP or ChildLine.
- 24 % of children who received TUK training self-reported that the training had made them *significantly* more careful online; and 45 % self-reported that the training had made them *moderately* more careful online. Overall, 69 % of children who had received TUK training reported that the training had made them more careful online.
- However, focus group findings indicate that interacting with strangers (i.e. adding them as MSN Messenger or Facebook friends, exchanging messages and providing personal information) is becoming an *accepted behaviour* not perceived as 'risk-taking' by young people.

## Policy Context

It is important to measure the impact of internet safety messaging on risk taking behaviour by children and young people in order to inform the design and content of high impact/low cost education programmes.

## Methodology

This research was conducted in May and June 2009. This large scale, mixed methods study incorporated two stages: (i) a qualitative element which included 21 focus groups with 84 young people aged 11-15 (49 girls and 35 boys) in schools throughout the UK who had received Internet safety training; and (ii) a large survey of 1718 young people across the UK aged 11-16 (52% female and 48% male) commissioned by the National Audit Office, making this one of the largest studies of young people and Internet safety in the UK. This sample included some children who had received internet safety advice, including CEOP's TUK, and some who had not received any internet safety advice.

## Background

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre has developed an internet safety education programme, known as *Think U Know* (TUK), for children and young people aged 5 – 16 and their parents/carers. The programme aims to increase participants' awareness and knowledge of the benefits and threats of technology and the internet. Over 14,000 professionals (including teachers, social workers and police) to date have been trained to deliver CEOP's TUK programme, reaching over 6 million children in the UK.

Like all training programmes, the TUK programme must be periodically evaluated to assess its impact on participants and inform future developments in content and delivery. CEOP therefore commissioned the Centre of Abuse and Trauma Studies, Kingston University, to perform an evaluation. This represents the first published evaluation of an internet safety education programme in Europe.

**Source** <http://www.cats-rp.org.uk/pdf%20files/Internet%20safety%20report%204-2010.pdf>; last accessed 25/11/10

**Research Team** Professor Julia Davidson (lead), Julie Grove-Hills (Research Fellow), Mia Lorenz (Researcher), Dr Elena Martellozzo (Researcher)

**Contact information** Professor Julia Davidson, [j.davidson@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:j.davidson@kingston.ac.uk)

**RH#2 has been produced by Kingston University for the UKCCIS Evidence Group**